

Utah's Challenge to Do the Write Thing **Lesson Materials**

Objective

The *Challenge to Do the Write Thing* is designed to be used as a part of the required middle school curriculum. The primary objective is to motivate students through their classroom discussions and writing to make a personal commitment to do something to reduce violence in their homes, schools and communities.

History

The *Do the Write Thing Challenge* is an initiative of the National Campaign to Stop Violence, sponsored by the Kuwait-America Foundation in appreciation for the United States' leadership in the freeing Kuwait during the Gulf War in 1991. Because children of Kuwait suffered most from the violence of the war, the Kuwaitis hoped to thank the United States for its efforts by creating a program to decrease violence in the U.S. The Utah Board of Juvenile Justice has participated in the *Challenge* since 1999. Last year we received over 1,000 essays from twenty-six of our middle schools.

Classroom Discussion Resources

Several of these resources are focused on the prevention of school violence. Resources about other types of violence can easily be found in your school library or on the Web.

Books

Bullying in Schools, What You Need to Know, by Paul Langan

Websites

www.justice.utah.gov/Juvenile/DoTheWriteThing

Do the Write Thing Utah site

www.dtwt.org

Do the Write Thing national site

www.safetyyouth.org

National Youth Violence Prevention
Resource Center

www.svrc.net

School Violence Resource Center

www.kidshealth.org

Understanding School Violence

www.ncdjjdp.org/cpsv

Center for the Prevention of School
Violence

www.ncpc.org

National Crime Prevention Council

www.bullyfree.org

Bully-Free for Me! Guide

www.NetSmartz.org

Activities and lesson plans for bullying prevention and Internet Safety

www.nobully.org

Ideas for addressing bullying in schools

Lesson Plans

The *Do the Write Thing Challenge* may be used as part of the curriculum in English, history, civics, health and other subjects.

The attached lessons designed by Utah English teacher Kim Hatch Irvine meet the following specific *standards* and *objectives* of the Eighth Grade Core:

3. Demonstrate Understanding of the Nature of Language

- a. Understand that language enhances and identifies human beings as meaning makers.
- b. Understand that language is the vehicle for constructing knowledge, acquiring skills, and developing habits of mind.
- c. Understand that language captures and records human aspirations and imagination.
- d. Understand that language is continuously evolving as a reflection of human evolution.
- e. Understand that language acquisition is not a matter of refining skills, but of increasing confidence, insight, and discernment.
- f. Understand that language conveys the depth of human experience, evoking both emotion and reason.

Objective 2 (Comprehension of Informational Text): Comprehend and evaluate informational text (i.e., textbooks, biographies/autobiographies, persuasive essays, letters, graphs, charts).

- a. Use external text features to enhance comprehension (i.e., headings, subheadings, pictures, captions, sidebars, annotations, italics, bolded words, graphs, charts and tables of contents).
- b. Comprehend text using internal text structures and their appropriate cue words and phrases (i.e., question/answer, comparison/contrast).
- c. Infer meaning from explicit information in text.
- d. Distinguish fact from opinion.

6. Use the Skills, Strategies, and Processes of Writing

- a. Develop a distinctive writing voice.
- b. Understand that writing is a process of skills, strategies, and practices for creating, revising, and editing a variety of texts.
- c. Develop reflective abilities and meta-awareness about writing.

- d. Use writing to discover and explore ideas.
- e. Develop collaborative writing skills to prepare for workplace writing.
- f. Understand that writing is a tool for thinking: solving problems, exploring issues, constructing questions, addressing inquiry.
- g. Understand that reading and writing are interrelated: writers approach new reading experiences with enhanced appreciation for the text.
- h. Appreciate the value of personal writing and writing-to-learn in daily applications of knowledge.

Standard 2 (Writing): Students will write informational and literary text to reflect on and recreate experiences, report observations, and persuade others.

Objective 1 (Writing to Learn): Evaluate information, interpret ideas, and demonstrate thinking through writing.

- a. Organize events and ideas in order of importance.
- b. Focus written facts or events around a clearly stated, unifying idea.
- c. Connect text to self, text to world and text to text.

Objective 2 (Extended Writing): Write to identify and reflect on feelings to recreate experiences. (Emphasize short biographies, narratives, or memoirs. Students should use the entire writing process to produce at least one extended piece per term, not necessarily limited to the type of writing emphasized at individual grade levels.)

- a. Convey a unifying theme or idea.
- b. Order events effectively and experiment with flashback or foreshadowing.
- c. Use narrative details (e.g., dialogue, description, imagery, symbolism).

Objective 3 (Revision and Editing): Revise and edit to strengthen ideas, organization, voice, word choice, sentence fluency and conventions.

- a. Evaluate and revise for:
 - Ideas: Specific and relevant details that support the idea.
 - Organization: An introduction, body, and conclusion with a controlling idea, topic sentences, and supporting details.
 - Voice: Appropriate tone and voice.
 - Word Choice: Words appropriate to audience.
 - Sentence Fluency: Varied sentence structure.
- b. Edit for conventions:
 - Correct grade-level spelling
 - Correct use of quotation marks and commas in dialogue.
 - Correct verb tenses.
 - Correct use of relative pronouns.
 - Correct agreement of pronouns and antecedents.
 - Correct capitalization of titles of books, poems, etc., and titles of courses (e.g., History 202).

Do the Write Thing Sample Lesson Plan

Submitted by Kim Hatch

Writing Traits: Voice, Word Choice

Grade Level: Middle School (6-8)

Time: 2-3 class periods

Supplies:

- Copies of sample student essays-
<http://www.juvenile.utah.gov/DoTheWriteThing/2004Book.pdf>
- Dictionaries
- Transparencies of winning student's work
- 6 writing traits rubrics (included)
- Transparency of Definition of Trait of Voice

Lesson Description:

Day One

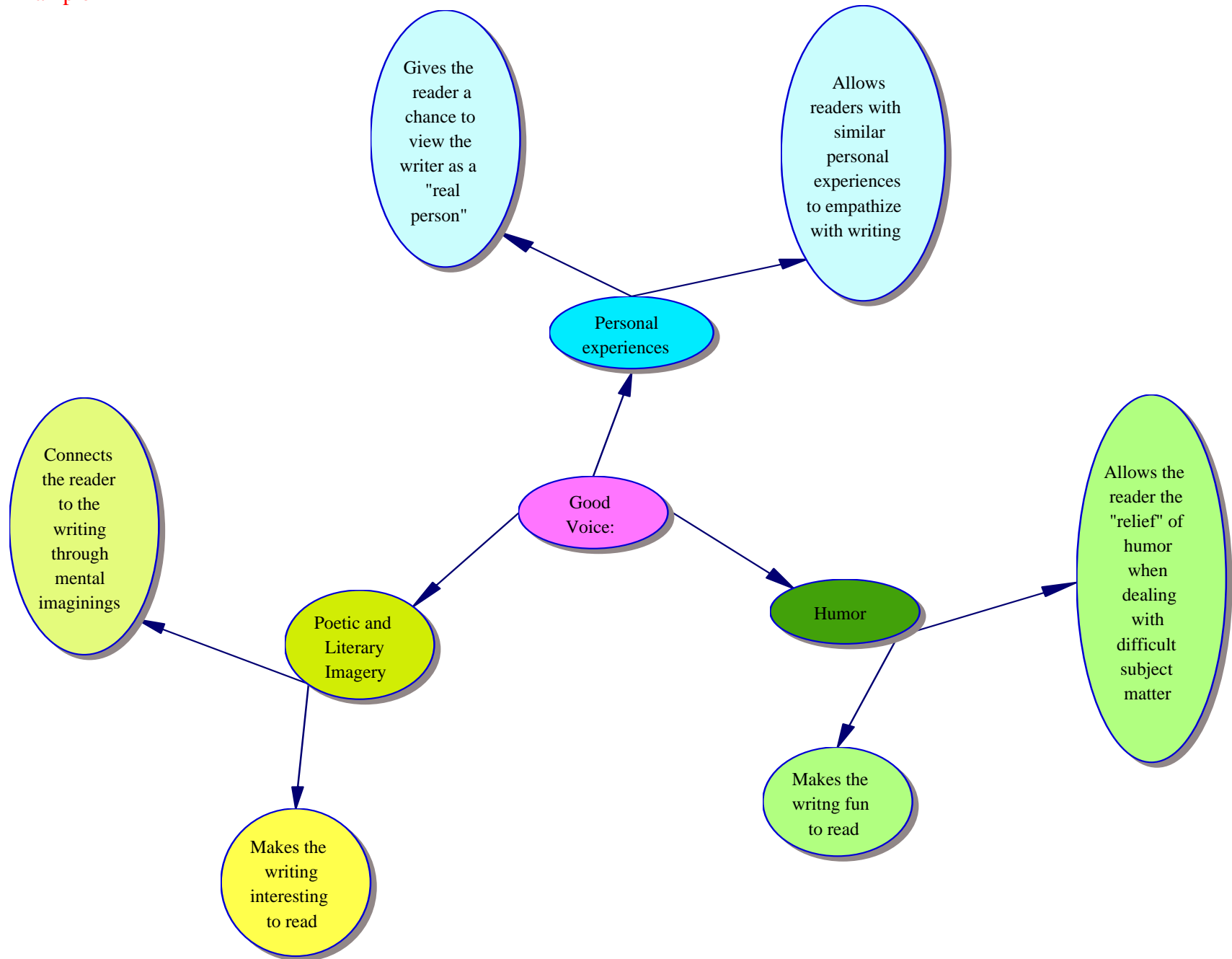
1. Display transparency describing Voice Trait. (See example A attached)
2. Discuss what the transparency means to good writing.
3. Have students suggest books where authors reflect good voice.
4. Display transparency of winning students work and discuss the aspects of good voice within the text.
5. In cooperative groups, have students analyze a winning essay and list, circle or describe all of the examples of good voice and what impact it has on the reader.
6. Have each group create a graphic organizer on a poster with these examples listed in the middle and the effects of the writing as support. (See example B attached)

Example A

DEFINITION FOR TRAIT OF VOICE

VOICE shows the writer's personality. The writing has a sound different from everyone else's. It contains feelings and emotions so that it does not sound like an encyclopedia article. The reader should be able to sense the sincerity and honesty of the writer. The writer should be writing from the heart. The language should bring the topic to life for the reader. The voice should be appropriate for the topic, purpose, and audience of the paper.

Example B



Day Two

1. Review with the students the contest rules and parameters.
2. Have students fill out the entry forms and send them home for parental approval.
3. Have students brainstorm about possible topics for their personal writing.
4. Each student should have at least two topics to choose from.
5. Each topic should be backed up by personal experiences, examples from literature, advice from appropriate adults, etc.
6. Have students outline the topic of their choice and plan to come to class tomorrow ready to write!

Day Three

1. Review voice definition.
2. Discuss the importance of relating personal connections to writing to facilitate reader understanding.
3. Write, write write...
4. Have students edit their own work and prepare for publication.
5. Review contest rules.
6. Have students share their essays with the class.

Lesson Plans on Violence

The importance of this lesson is to allow students the opportunity to examine the impact of youth violence in their lives and to communicate what they think should be done to change our culture of violence. Encourage students to make personal commitments to do something about violence in their homes, schools, and communities.

Have students brainstorm and come up with what their definition of violence is.

(Have students brainstorm on their own paper 1-2 minutes, allow students to share with the class and define 3 minutes)

My students define it as any action that is used to scare, harass, control, or cause harm or injury to another person.

You may use the definition from the dictionary.

Use a newspaper to find an article about youth violence.

(5-6 minutes)

Write a paragraph about:

What happened?

What you know about the suspect?

What you know about the victim, how it made them feel, and how it affected him/her?

Watch the news and look for youth violence.

(Watch the news for 30 minutes, chose one and do write up at home)

Write a paragraph about:

What happened?

What you know about the suspect?

What you know about the victim, how it made them feel, and how it affected him/her?

Brainstorm with the class about different types of youth violence.

(Have students brainstorm on their paper 1 ½ -2 minutes, discuss as a class- maybe as long as 5 minutes)

Here are some examples:

Bully

Prejudice

Alcoholism

Child Abuse

Drug Abuse

Family Violence

Gangs

Hate Groups

Suicide

Rape

Racism

Exploitation of Children

Discrimination
Theft/Burglary
Emotional Abuse
Physical Abuse
Sexual Abuse
Media Violence
Dead-End Situations
Absence of Positive Parental Role Models
Gossip, Jealousy, and Put-Downs

Have a class discussion about why youth violence occurs.

(5-7 minutes)

Have students tell why they think someone has been violent with them, people they know, or care for.

Examples of why:

To control others

To cause fear

They think it is fun and entertaining

To hurt someone

They can not control themselves-anger, hatred

Dysfunctional family

Has been a victim

They do not care how others feel

Peer pressure

Judgement of another person

Fear

For popularity and respect

How does youth violence affect my home and community?

(can be as short as 5-10 minutes)

Some of the examples can come from the write ups from the newspaper articles and the news.

Have students share personal experiences with the class or in writing.

Find a newspaper article about a youth who has helped someone or their community.

(5-6 minutes)

What did they do?

Why?

How did it make the helper feel?

How did it make the receiver feel?

How did it affect the receiver's life?

Watch the news and look for information about youth who have helped others or their community.

(watch news for 30 minutes, do write up at home)

What did they do?

Why?

How did it make the helper feel?

How did it make the receiver feel?

How did it affect the receiver's life?

Read story/poetry about what youth can do to stop violence.

(5 minutes)

Have students brainstorm on paper what they can do about violence.

(1-2 minutes)

Have a class discussion about how youth can stop violence.

(5-10 minutes)

Here are some examples:

Take personal responsibility for your actions

Make a personal commitment to not participate in violence

Be a positive role model for younger children

Be kind to others

Be a peer counselor or conflict mediator

Set positive goals for yourself

Make a commitment to avoid drugs

Talk with your parents

Promote faith in God and moral values

Get involved in doing community service

Other sources:

Movie: The Outsiders -clip of the boys going into the church to pull students out.

Movie: Pay It Forward -clip of the boy in the beginning with the bullies, clip of him with the bullies at the end.

Movie: A Christmas Carol

Book: Kids With Courage-short stories about youth who have made a difference in their communities.

PACE Manual-has themes about character development for each month. October, November, March and April discuss stopping violence, helping others, self respect, citizenship, and taking responsibility. There are lessons plans on each topic, lists of songs that can be played, poetry, list of movies and books that can be used, quotes, and activities.

Have you ever become violent?

This is the longest part of the assignment. Now that you have discussed what violence is, what causes youth violence, how it has affected their lives, and what they can do to make a difference, read an essay to the class, written by a former student, about a time he/she became violent or how they felt when they were a victim.

Have students write an essay about when they have become violent or felt out of control. If they have not experienced that, have them write about a family member, friend, stranger, or associate that has become violent. What did they do? Was someone hurt? What did it accomplish? How has it affected the victim's life? How could they have handled it?

Some students may want to write an essay about a time when they or someone they know was a victim of youth violence. What did the perpetrator do? How did you handle it? How did it make you feel? How has it affected your life? What could you do about it?

You may have the students share their papers with the class when they are done. I like to have my classes make personal commitments/goals in writing and come up with community service projects we can do for the school and/or community. We take pictures of the students doing the projects and have others in the class write an article about: Who the student was? What they did? How it made them and others feel? What they accomplished?